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North Yorkshire and Humber LDN wins BSPD Outstanding Innovation Award 2021

Motivation and a passion for improving children's oral health are essential ingredients for any individual who enters BSPD's annual Outstanding Innovation Award. Simon Hearnshaw, the winner in 2021, has both in abundance.

Entering on behalf of the North Yorkshire and Humber Local Dental Network, of which he is chairman, he impressed the judges with the 'In Practice Prevention' (IPP) scheme that ensured thousands more children in the region got access to preventive treatment in a dental practice.

The IPP programme was targeted at deprived areas where oral health need is greatest and at children with the highest levels of disease. A group of dental practices were funded, through a bespoke flexible commissioning approach, to offer more appointments to children.

Health Education England provided training for dental nurses to develop additional skills, such as applying fluoride varnish. The programme treated more than 17,000 children over 2.5 years. Access improved, as did fluoride varnish application rates. There was also a shift of treatment activity towards a more preventive approach.

BSPD's judges said ***"With his In Practice Prevention programme working with North Yorkshire and Humber LDN, Simon Hearnshaw addressed BSPD's key aims: improving the oral health of children, reducing oral health inequalities, and upskilling of dental teams to drive up prevention.***

In his entry, Simon provided simple and clear evidence of making a difference through increased numbers of children accessing dental care as well as applications of fluoride varnish. We can see the potential for this initiative to be rolled out nationally and have a long-lasting effect. Simon is 2021's worthy winner."

Commenting on his success, Dr Hearnshaw said: "This recognition is shared by all the practices which got on board as well as the brilliant dental nurses who delivered the care, helping to make a difference to thousands of children. Our programme demonstrated that, with the right approach, flexible commissioning works."

BSPD is delighted by the variety in this year's entries which included:

Jo Dawson's Raisin Awareness Campaign, dedicated to achieving a ban on raisins as a school snack. The judges said: "***Jo has amazing tenacity and her campaigning is linked not just to reducing dental caries but obesity too. Undeterred when she could not change the policy of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, she set about making a difference at local level.***"

The Tooth FaiRead blog from Dayna Rosenthal and Nikita Vasria-Shah. The judges said: "***This is a blog by two dentists who are clearly enthusiastic about paediatric dentistry and interested in reaching and inspiring others at a similar stage in their career. Their entry was well thought through and the content of the blog is engaging and interesting.***"

Katie Davies, creator of Habox, a dental product subscription box for children. The judges said: "***Katie has clearly spent a lot of time creating Habox in order to improve family engagement with oral health and her inspiring scheme is based on effective behaviour-change principles.***"

BSPD spokesperson, Claire Stevens, commented: "This is the fifth year of the OIA and we continue to be impressed by the innovation and dedication of members working to improve children's oral health."